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PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES

OF PHILADELPHIA.

VOL. III. MAY AND JUNE, 1847. No. 9.

Stated Meeting, May 4, 1847.

The Society convened this evening, for the first time, in the new and commodious Library and Meeting Room in the basement of their Hall. On this occasion, Vice-President MORTON, upon taking the Chair, addressed the Society as follows:—

Gentlemen,—As we now meet here for the first time, and under circumstances highly auspicious to the success of our Institution and to the interests of science, I beg to be indulged in a few remarks.

On the evening of the 25th of January, 1812, six gentlemen met at a private residence, the home of one of them, in this city. Their objects were, conversation and improvement. They had often met before, but without any definite intention; but they were *now* incited by a new impulse, a prospective enterprise.—Let them speak for themselves, in the following brief but emphatic declaration:

"We will contribute to the formation of a museum of natural history, a library of works of science, a chemical experimental laboratory, an experimental philosophical apparatus, and every other desirable appendage or convenience for the illustration and advancement of natural knowledge, and for the common benefit of all those individuals who may be admitted members of our Institution."

This resolve was adopted at the second meeting of the founders, one week after their primary sitting, on which occasion

Thomas Say was also present, and Dr. Gerard Troost was elected first President of this Society. Little did these two gentlemen, and their five colleagues, foresee the results of their unpretending enterprise; for Science, in this country, was then in its infancy, and the number of those who fostered it was few indeed.

From the acorn springs the oak; and from the humble efforts and continued self-sacrifices of a few private individuals, has arisen this Institution, now grown to the manhood of science.

Thirty-five years have elapsed since those seven persons, private citizens, men without fortune or influence, laid the foundation of our Society. That their intentions have been ably and zealously sustained, through periods of probation and uncertainty, I can safely aver. Trials are the best incentives to exertion; and the mind knows not its resources until forced to contend with adverse circumstances. There were those who resolved in their minds, who vowed in their hearts, that this institution *should* succeed. Many of them are now in their graves; but their memory is inseparably blended with the annals and the honours of science. Maclure, Say, Godman, Collins, Conrad, Harlan and Keating—each has left his name on the tablet of nature; and could the venerable Maclure now behold the institution which he so ably sustained, and so munificently provided for, how would he rejoice in the consummation of those hopes which he so ardently cherished during the last twenty-five years of his life!

Among our living members are many to whom I would gladly award the just meed of praise for their signal and successful exertions in this our common cause; and there is one among us in the prime of life, and full of zeal in diffusing those great truths which in part illustrate, in part constitute, the laws of Omnipotence. He has come to us clothed in the spirit of science. What he has accomplished, every eye can see. An hundred years of ordinary prosperity could not have realized so much. To say less would be unjust. To say more would wound a mind that shrinks from observation and eulogy.

Let us continue our exertions to make this Institution a practical school of Natural History, by throwing open our doors to all who seek knowledge; and, supported and encouraged by the flattering auspices under which we have now met, let us redouble our zeal to unfold and diffuse the truths of Science.

DONATIONS TO MUSEUM.

Dr. Wilson presented a very large and elegant polished slab of Dendritic Limestone, from the vicinity of Bristol, England.

Dr. William Blanding presented a mounted specimen of Condylura cristata.

DONATIONS TO LIBRARY.

The American Journal of Science and Arts. New Series. No. 9. May, 1847. From the Editors.

Literary Record and Journal of the Linnean Association of Pennsylvania College. Vol. 3. No. 7. From the Association.

Proceedings of the Providence Franklin Society. Vol. 1. No. 1. April, 1847. From the Society.

The following works were deposited by Dr. Thomas B. Wilson:

Zoological Illustrations. By William Swainson, F. R. S. 6 vols. 8vo. London, 1820–1832.

New Illustrations of Zoology. By Peter Brown. 1 vol. 4to. London, 1770.

Gleanings of Natural History. By George Edwards, F. R. S., &c. 7 vols. 4to. London.

Zoological Illustrations in Java and the neighboring Islands. By Thomas Horsfield, M. D., F. R. S., &c. 1 vol. 4to. London, 1824.

Illustrations of the family of Psittacidæ, or Parrots. By Edward Lear, A. L. S. 1 vol. Folio. London, 1832.

Cimelia Physica: figures of rare and curious quadrupeds, birds, &c. By George Shaw, M. D., F. R. S., &c. 1 vol. Folio. London, 1796.

Mr. Gambel read a paper by Lieut. J. W. Abert, U. S. A., describing a new Quail, from New Mexico. Referred to Messrs. Gambel, Cassin, Harris and Townsend.

Dr. Leidy read a letter from Prof. Spencer F. Baird, of Carlisle, Pennsylvania, describing a Hybrid between the Canvas-back Duck and the common Duck.

The Librarian read a letter from the Rev. John G. Morris, of Baltimore, requesting certain exchanges of books. Referred to the Librarian, with authority to act.

Dr. Morton presented a paper from Dr. R. W. Gibbes, of Columbia, S. C., in continuation of his description of the fossil remains of the Zeuglodon, from the Eocene of South

Carolina, with additional drawings of the same. Referred to the Committee on the previous portions of the paper.

Professor Hare made some observations on the combustion of gum in oxygen gas, and stated that the brilliant light which it emitted during combustion, proceeded from the presence of lime, which he considered an essential constituent of gums.

Dr. Leidy stated that whilst engaged in examining the structure of some Lichens, he discovered numerous octagonal crystals intermingled with the cellular structure of several species of *Parmelia.* Many of the crystals equalled in size the greenish cells themselves, although none of them appeared to be contained within the latter. As chemical analysis has detected in these plants a large proportion of oxalate of lime, Dr. Leidy supposed these crystals to be that salt.

Stated Meeting, May 11, 1847.

MR. PHILLIPS in the Chair.

DONATIONS TO MUSEUM.

A large massive specimen of Copper ore from the Flemington Copper Mines, New Jersey. Presented by Dr. Thos. McEuen.

An earthenware Indian utensil, taken from a crevice in a rock on Pine creek, Lycoming county, Pennsylvania. From Mr. Thos. H. Taylor.

Specimen of Astacus affinis, from Kentucky. From Prof. Haldeman.

Bituminous coal from the Tippecanoe pit, Clover Hill, Va., and Fuller's earth from the same locality. From Professor Johnson.

Mounted specimen of Callipepla squammata, Gould, from Mexico. From Lieut. J. W. Abert, U. S. A.